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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to obtain information from deans of American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business accredited colleges of business and from human resource managers from the 200 largest companies in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. A questionnaire containing 49 selected business communication competencies was developed and mailed to these two groups. Usable questionnaires were received from 103 deans and 52 human resources directors. The deans perceived "punctuates written communication effectively" and "uses personal integrity in all communication" as most essential. Human resource managers perceived "uses personal integrity in all communication," and "maintains appropriate confidentiality" as most essential. Contains a table of data. (Author/RS)

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THE VALUE OF SELECTED COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES AS PERCEIVED BY COLLEGE OF BUSINESS DEANS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGERS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to obtain information from deans of American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business accredited colleges of business and from human resource managers from the 200 largest companies in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. A questionnaire containing 49 selected business communication competencies was developed and mailed to these two groups. A total of 103 usable questionnaires was received from deans and 52 usable questionnaires from human resources directors.

The deans perceived "punctuates written communication effectively" and "uses personal integrity in all communication" as most essential. Human resource managers perceived "uses personal integrity in all communication," and "maintains appropriate confidentiality" as most essential.

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INTRODUCTION

There has been an abundance of literature in recent years concerning needed business communication skills and abilities. Research has indicated that business communication competencies are essential for a successful business career. What business communication competencies should be taught? What competencies are being taught? Are the colleges of business providing graduates with the needed business communication competencies required in the business world?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine which business communication competencies college of business deans and human resource managers perceive as most essential. A comparison of the responses was made. The business communication competencies studied include: 1. writing skills 2. oral/interpersonal skills 3. global communication skills and 4. other business communication skills.

METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was developed and mailed to the dean of colleges of business which are accredited by AACSB. The deans of these institutions were identified from the 1995-1996 Membership Directory of AACSB. There are approximately 300 accredited colleges of business throughout the United States. One hundred three usable questionnaire were received. A questionnaire was also sent to human resource managers of the 200 largest companies in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. These companies were identified from the May, 1996, edition of the Dallas Morning News top 200 companies.
Fifty-two usable questionnaires were received.

This study examined:
1. The opinion of deans on which communication competencies are essential for college of business graduates.
2. What communication skills human resource managers believe are essential for entry level college business graduates.

FINDINGS

The following scale was used by deans and human resources managers to rate each of the business communication competencies.

4 = Extremely Essential -- Competency is **absolutely** essential for employment.
3 = Very Essential -- Competency is **quite** essential for employment.
2 = Essential -- Competency is **somewhat** essential but could be learned on the job.
1 = Not Essential -- Competency is **not** essential for employment.
0 = Undecided -- can't decide if competency is essential.

TABLE 1

DEANS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGERS PERCEIVED VALUE OF SELECTED COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES

	weighted averages	
COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES	**DEANS**	**HRM**
1.) Punctuates written communication effectively.	3.772	3.196 *
2.) Uses personal integrity in all communication. (includes all relevant information and is not deceptive in any way).	3.750	3.765
3.) Understands the main idea of a message.	3.683	3.327 **
4.) Maintains appropriate confidentiality.	3.660	3.735
5.) Uses correct grammar in written communication.	3.647	3.551
6.) Uses eye contact effectively.	3.576	3.104
7.) Organizes ideas in written communication.	3.573	3.445 *
8.) Listens to and understands others.	3.566	3.269 **
9.) Spells correctly.	3.559	3.440 **
10.) Works effectively on teams.	3.556	2.980
	DEANS	**HRM**
11.) Knows general principles of writing effective business communication.	3.510	3.137 **
12.) Uses effective proofreading, editing, and revising of written communication.	3.465	3.314

13.) Writes effective short reports.	3.373	3.000 **
14.) Avoids stereotyping persons of another culture.	3.367	3.313
15.) Uses correct grammar in oral communication.	3.364	3.294
16.) Understands that neat, attractive written communication is important.	3.350	2.942 **
17.) Writes effective letters.	3.349	3.100 **
18.) Shows respect for another culture.	3.343	3.204
19.) Makes effective decisions. (using effective decision making techniques)	3.317	3.140
	DEANS	**HRM**
20.) Uses an appropriate vocabulary.	3.299	3.235
21.) Makes a good first impression.	3.296	3.265
22.) Writes effective resumes and letters of application.	3.294	2.936 **
23.) Distinguishes inference and opinion from fact.	3.283	3.020 *
24.) Develops a "you" attitude; tries to understand the other person's norms and values.	3.239	2.959 *
25.) Writes well-organized paragraphs.	3.233	3.040 **
26.) Possesses positive attitudes in communication.	3.204	3.320
27.) Writes concisely. (leaves out unnecessary words and phrases.)	3.202	3.022
28.) Deals effectively with conflict.	3.186	3.160
29.) Makes decisions cooperatively with others.	3.182	3.149
	DEANS	**HRM**
30.) Knows how to use and interpret tabular and graphic data.	3.172	2.745 **
31.) Writes strong sentences. (with active verbs and concrete words.)	3.136	2.755 **
32.) Understands the importance of intercultural business.	3.125	2.500 **
33.) Understands that a person's culture is his or her way of looking at the world.	3.124	3.102
34.) Writes on the reader's level.	3.119	2.922
35.) Uses positive nonverbal communication. (gestures, personal appearance, posture, etc.)	3.102	3.082
36.) Collects, analyzes, and interprets data.	3.090	2.894
37.) Disagrees tactfully.	3.071	3.333 *
38.) Uses the telephone effectively.	3.031	3.120

39.) Knows how to find and use secondary sources of business information.	3.029	2.820
	DEANS	**HRM**
40.) Learns appropriate work and social behavior for the culture he or she is communicating with.	3.020	2.574 **
41.) Possesses sensitivity to the language, values,or behaviors of another culture.	3.010	3.083
42.) Possesses skills in informal business and social conversation.	3.010	2.818
43.) Writes effective long reports.	2.981	2.784 *
44.) Avoids slang, jargon, and abbreviations.	2.969	2.776
45.) Uses direct, specific language when writing to someone whose first language is not English.	2.949	2.696 *
46.) Perceives how a written message will be received by a given audience.	2.940	3.160 *
47.) Uses a clear, distinct, and pleasant voice.	2.889	3.078
48.) Uses effective speech making techniques.	2.866	2.571 *
49.) Uses multi-media effectively.	2.646	2.647

*Significant at the .05 level
**Significant at the .01 level

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine how essential deans of AACSB colleges of business and human resource managers in the 200 largest companies in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area perceived selected business communication competencies. A questionnaire was developed and mailed to each group.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Both deans and human resource managers perceive "uses personal integrity in all communication" "maintains appropriate confidentiality" and " uses correct grammar in written communication" as extremely essential.

2. Deans believed that "punctuates written communication effectively," "uses eye contact effectively," "writes effective short reports," and "works effectively on teams" to be more essential than do human resource mangers.

3. Human resources managers perceive "uses a clear, distinct, and pleasant voice," Possesses sensitivity to the language, values, or behaviors of another culture," "perceives how a written message will be received by a given audience" and "disagrees tactfully" to be more essential than deans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Deans and human resources managers should meet to discuss the most essential communication competencies needed by college of business graduates.

2. A study should be conducted to determine what smaller business believe are the most essential communication competencies for college of business graduates.

3. A study should be conducted to determine business communication instructors' views on essential communication competencies.

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